

Maryland SHIP "Health Action" Newsletter

September 27, 2013

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Maryland's Unintended Pregnancy Rate Decreases



Unintended pregnancy can have significant, negative consequences for women, their families and society as a whole. Research links births resulting from unintended or closely spaced pregnancies to adverse maternal and child health outcomes, and social and economic challenges. In Maryland, the rate of unintended pregnancies has declined over the last decade. However, more than half of all pregnancies in the state are still unplanned.

A recent report by the Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit organization that seeks to advance sexual and reproductive health, suggested that although Maryland has made significant gains, improvements are still needed. The percent of unintended pregnancies in Maryland dropped from 60% to 56% between 2002 and 2008, likely attributed to a decline in sexual activity and a greater use of effective birth control methods, specifically among teenagers. Maryland's teen pregnancy rate has dropped 51% since 1988, compared to a 39% decrease nationally.

In addition to teens, low-income and African-American women have higher than average unintended pregnancy rates. The rate for low-income women is more than five times the rate for high-income women. This disparity is attributed to financial barriers to obtaining the most effective birth control methods.

Click [here](#) to learn more about unintended pregnancies in Maryland.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) for reducing the number of teen births and increasing the number of pregnancies that are intended.

MHCC Report Measures Quality and Performance of Health Benefit Plans in Maryland



The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) released its 2013 Health Benefit Plan Quality and Performance Report: Measuring the Quality and Performance of Maryland's Commercial Health Benefit Plans. The report presents quality and performance information on individual and authorized combinations of HMO, POS, PPO, and EPO plans operating in Maryland.

The information in this report allows Maryland residents to compare health benefit plans on key quality measures regarding clinical processes and outcomes, and member satisfaction. The 2013 report contains information on 87 quality measures grouped into six categories: primary care and wellness for children and adolescents, child respiratory conditions, women's health, primary care for adults, behavioral health, and member experience and satisfaction.

Overall, Maryland plans had strong performance in the categories of primary care and wellness for children and adolescents, child respiratory conditions, and behavioral health, suggesting that the state's health benefit plans continue to work effectively in not only promoting prevention and wellness initiatives, but also in providing holistic care for all members.

Click [here](#) to access the full report.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) for increasing the proportion of people with health insurance.

Upcoming Webinar: What's Winning in Maryland School Wellness - Strategies for Wellness Policy Implementation



Join speakers from the Maryland State Department of Education, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Wicomico County Public Schools, and Action for Healthy Kids on Tuesday, October 8, 2013, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to learn more about best practices in implementing wellness policies.

Every public school system in Maryland is required to have a school wellness policy. This webinar will discuss how school systems translate their written wellness policies into practice. This learning opportunity is great for parents, community leaders, teachers, school administration, and school food service.

Click [here](#) to register for the webinar.

Click [here](#) to visit the Maryland School Health Web site.

Health Literacy Maryland Announcements

New Leadership

Health Literacy Maryland (HLM) announced new leadership this month. The newly appointed executive team will guide the coalition towards the mission of improving health outcomes through health literacy in the state of Maryland.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the purpose of the executive team

and bios of the new leaders.



Take Action during Health Literacy Month by Becoming an HLM Member!

Three Task Force groups will be gearing up soon, and will need committed and active members to move health literacy forward. Task forces will focus on:

- Awareness and Recruitment: Promoting Health Literacy Maryland and growing the coalition membership
- Clearing House Resource: Developing a platform of vetted health literacy materials for health care providers
- Policy Awareness: Intervening to promote policies which support health literacy in the state of Maryland

Please contact Katherine Garcia at kgarcia@umd.edu for more information on the task forces.

Join the University of Maryland's School of Public Health, the Center for Health Literacy, and Health Literacy Maryland for a Grand Rounds Lecture on Health Literacy Innovation

Register for free for the Public Health Innovations Grand Rounds lecture! Dr. Scott Ratzan, health literacy specialist, will deliver a lecture on health literacy and health communication on October 4, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. with a reception to follow.

Click [here](#) for more information about the event.

Click [here](#) to register.

Click [here](#) for more information on Health Literacy Maryland.

News from the Office of Primary Care Access

Upcoming Webinar

On September 30, 2013, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. EDT, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health will host the *Integrating Primary Care and Public Health Learning Community* webinar. The webinar will cover issues and concerns related to the integration of primary care and public health. To join the call, dial 877-668-4493, and enter the access code 660 498 220 when prompted.

Have you Registered for the Rural Action Assembly?

On October 16-18, 2013, the Maryland State Office of Rural Health, the Rural Maryland Council and the Maryland Rural Health Association are hosting a conference focused on defining key issues for Maryland's rural communities. We hope through the integration of key rural stakeholders, we can work towards creating sustainable rural communities and plan for the future and prosperity of rural Maryland.

Click [here](#) to register.

The State Loan Repayment Program Application Cycle is Open

The application is now posted for the State Loan Repayment Program for physicians. Primary Care physicians working for a non-profit in a health professional shortage area may be eligible. Applications are due October 25, 2013.

Click [here](#) to learn more.